Prohibition on smoking

356. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the last meeting held by his Ministry with regard to prohibition on smoking following the directives of the Supreme Court;

(b) the number of persons who violated the directives of the Supreme Court;

(c) the action taken against such persons; and

(d) the monitoring mechanism followed by his Ministry to take stern steps for not following such directives?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) In pursuance to orders passed by the Supreme Court of India on 2nd November, 2001, a written communication has been sent from the Union Health & Family Welfare Minsitry to the Health Secretaries of all States and Union Territories, requesting them to take necessary action to ensure prohibition of smoking in public places and to take necessary effective steps to give wide publicity to the orders of the Supreme Court in electronic and print media so that the general public are aware that smoking is prohibited in public places and as such they should comply with the orders of the Supreme Court. Further, an advertisement has been issued by the Union Health & Family Welfare Ministry in leading newspapers/electronic media giving wide publicity to the orders of the Supreme Court for similar compliance by the general public.

(b) to (d) The State Governments/Union Territories and respective authorities are required to take action against persons violating the Supreme Court orders. Details regarding the number of violators and action against them are not maintained at the Central level.

Harassment by Drug Inspectors

357. SHRI CHO. S. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many drug and drug related importers are being harassed by Drug Inspectors posted with the customs and their imports are delayed;

(b) whether it is also a fact that they are insisting on production of Bank Guarantee instead of Letter of Guarantee as per the provisions of the Drug and Cosmetics Act;

(c) if so, how many imports have been delayed due to such harassment; and

(d) the steps being taken to bring such officials to book and action initiated against them?

THE MINSITER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) The port and Air Port Offices of CDSCO at Customs are supervised by Asstt. Drugs Controller/Technical Officers. There are no cases reported about harassment of any importer from these offices.

(b) Bank Guarantee is not required under the provisions of the Drugs & Cosmetics Act and Rules thereunder. As per information made available by all the Port Officers of Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO). There has been no instance of insisting on Bank Guarantee.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Irregularities in purchase of drugs

358. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item "Central Body doctored drugs purchase norm" which appeared in the Times of India, dated 28th January, 2002;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) the steps taken to identify the reasons for such large scale irregularities in the purchase of drugs and to fix responsibility therefor;

(d) the measures taken/proposed to be taken to punish the guilty; and

(e) how Government propose to compensate the victims of sub-standard drugs purchased from unregistered, unqualified and black-listed firms and supplied to CGHS beneficiaries?